Amarnath Yatra were strengthened this year in the light of past experience and inputs regarding the designs of the terrorists with the arrangements having been planned out after a series of high-level meetings. The quantum of security forces deployed for Yatra security this time was higher than last year. The functional and territorial jurisdictions and tasks of various forces and units as regards area domination and presence of the heights along the route, road opening parties (RoPs), escort duty, camp security, access control and manning of check posts, anti-sabotage checks etc. had been fixed in advance by the State Government. For the better coordination and planning of security arrangements for the Yatra 2001, an apex body was formed by the State Government consisting of all members of the Core Group of UHQ at Srinagar with Chief Executive Officer, Shrine Board and concerned DIGs and Brigadiers as special invitees. Security coordination groups for the Yatra had also been constituted at lower levels.

(c) In a terrorist attack on the Amarnath yatris at Sheshnag Camp, Anantnag on 21 July, 2001, 6 pilgrims were killed.

Problems of North-Eastern Region

1847. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has seen news report under the heading "NCP accuse Centre for neglecting N-E" which appeared in 'The Hindu' on 5th June, 2001;

(b) if so, Government reaction thereto; and

(c) the measures to be taken by Government to tackle the problems of North-Eastern Region which are threatening to snowball into a major crisis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I. D. SWAMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government is committed to restoration of peace in the North East. A Central team consisting of Shri I. D. Swami, Minister

of State for Home Affairs and Dr. P. D. Shenoy, Additional Secretary (Home) visited Manipur from 5th to 7th July, 2001. The team was sent to assess the situation on the spot and meet representatives of political parties, social workers, students groups, Non Governmental Organisations and other associations. The team met and hears these groups and received representations. In a meeting with MPs and MLAs Forum of Manipur on 8th July, 2001, Government decided to review th ceasefire with NSCN(I-M) in its entirety including the words "without territorial limits". Prime Minister also took a meeting with Chief Ministers of six North Eastern States and Governor of Manipur on 27th July, 2001. After considering the views of the State Governments in the North East and the elected representatives and organisations/associations of various NE States, the words "without territorial limits" have been dropped from the ceasefire agreement.

Probe on border lapses

1848. SHRI C. O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether for sudden armed intrusion by Bangladesh Rifles, Government have since appointed a probe to fix responsibility on the BSF authorities manning the border for lapses, if any; and

(b) if so, what are their findings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) No, Sir. In the face of the unprovoked and unwarranted intrusion by the Bangladesh Rifles forces into the village of Pyrdiwah in the East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya along the India-Bangladesh border in April 2001, the BSF held it ground valiantly and acted in its best judgement. Therefore, there is no question of appointing a 'Probe' to fix responsibility on the BSF authorities manning the India-Bangladesh border.

(b) Does not arise in view of the reply given above.